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TAGS: [NATO](#) [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [KCFE](#) [RU](#)
SUBJECT: ALLIES APPRECIATE DAS KRAMER'S BRIEFING ON
US/RUSSIA EXPERTS TALKS

REF: STATE 107265

Classified By: Charge Richard G. Olson for reasons 1.4 (b), (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: Allies praised DAS David Kramer's briefing to Allies on the US/Russia experts' talks in Washington (July 30-31) on missile defense (MD) and CFE. Allies expect US leadership in these negotiations with Russia, and greatly appreciate our efforts to brief and consult with them. Kramer noted the US is very interested in Russian proposals on MD cooperation, but disagrees with the Russian precondition to halt US plans with Czech/Poland. On CFE, Kramer reported that the US proposed a forward-leaning concept of reciprocal actions between Russia and the Alliance to break the Adapted CFE deadlock and facilitate the fulfillment of the Istanbul Commitments. In follow-up questions, a pessimistic mood prevailed among Allies concerning the inflexible Russian negotiating posture on these critical issues. End Summary.

Missile Defense

¶2. (C) EUR Deputy Assistant Secretary David Kramer briefed NATO political advisors on July 30 experts' talks on missile defense (points were drawn reftel). He emphasized US interest in cooperation and receptiveness to the Russian offer of Gabala and Armavir, but noted we disagree with Russian insistence that it be mutually exclusive of the US plans in the Czech Republic and Poland. Kramer noted divergence on the threat perception, but stressed this is just the first of three related meetings before the 22 ministerial meeting in mid-October.

¶3. (C) Germany asked if the Russians categorically rejected our MD proposals. Kramer responded that the Russians were critical but did not reject them out right. He said Russia does not recognize the threat from Iran and therefore, saw no need for a system with interceptors and a guidance radar stationed in Poland and the Czech Republic at this juncture. The Netherlands asked if there was a real possibility for a break-through. Kramer said while it is true that there were no breakthroughs, it is still too early to predict. The US will work to narrow the divergence on the threat assessment and has shown the Russians our earnest desire to cooperate on

missile defense with them. The Czech Ambassador asked whether we have contingency plans since Kosovo, CFE, and MD will all come to a head at the end of 2007. Kramer said the Duma elections in early December will also come into play. He said the Russians will likely try to force us to choose from a range of issues and then tell us the price on each issue; we should avoid trade-offs and deal with each issue on its own merits. Greece asked whether Kislyak specifically linked MD and CFE. Kramer said the Russians did not do so explicitly, but their insistence on dealing with CFE and MD in the same group of meetings might imply such a perspective from Moscow. (NOTE: President Putin and others have discussed both issues together in the past underscoring that there is such a link in Russian minds. END NOTE)

Allies Appreciate US Consultations on CFE

¶4. (C) DAS Kramer provided Allies with copies of the talking points the U.S. shared with the Russian team during U.S.-Russian CFE consultations July 31. He recalled that the ideas reflected in the points had been discussed in general terms at the HLTF on July 26, and that we appreciated Allies, input. He said the U.S. had made an effort to be forward-leaning with the Russians in outlining the concept for an agreement on parallel actions to break the impasse on Adapted CFE ratification and fulfillment of the Istanbul commitments. We had also made clear to the Russians that we planned to work closely with Allies on any new ideas. He said that DFM Kislyak had agreed to review the U.S. concept, but that a main theme in Russia's initial response was that Russia's concerns were not limited to ratification of Adapted CFE by NATO Allies. Kramer noted that the Russians

had raised concerns about the U.S. ratification process, the Baltic States, the flank regime, and "substantial combat forces" as the phrase is used in the NATO-Russia Founding Act.

¶5. (C) Kramer considered Kislyak's initial, skeptical response predictable, if less than encouraging. He stressed that an agreement to pursue parallel actions will require Russia to fulfill its end of the bargain. It at least was positive that the Russians had agreed to pursue further discussions in a follow-on U.S.-Russia senior experts, session.

¶6. (C) The Spanish Ambassador asked if the Russians are really interested in changing the flank regime. Kramer told him that the Russians criticized the U.S. paper for not including the flank, but also raised many other issues. Allies welcomed DAS Kramer's upcoming consultations in Kyiv and Chisinau. Several were concerned by reports of Moscow's arm twisting in both capitals to support Russian steps to undermine CFE.

COMMENT

¶7. (C) The start of the summer lull did not dull interest in DAS Kramer's briefing. We invited political advisors, but three Ambassadors and four Charges also showed up. This is very unusual for the status-conscious Europeans at NATO, especially in August. Allies told us afterwards that they greatly appreciated the briefing. There is anxiety among some Allies that the U.S. may cut a deal with Russia, and Kramer's briefings have noticeably reduced Allied anxiety about "secret negotiations." Kramer, in fact, explicitly reassured Allies that "secret deals" between the U.S. and Russia were out of the question. The UK, in particular, encouraged us to continue the transparency on bilateral CFE talks with the Russians and to consider holding the next HLTF before the next US/Russia experts, meeting so that -- as the July 26 HLTF preceded the Kislyak meeting -- Allies are again consulted beforehand. Most Allies seem to support US leadership on this issue, but point out that it is Conventional Forces in "Europe" -- a point Kramer also made

-- and hope we will continue briefing (and consulting) on CFE. The NATO International Staff reminded Kramer (privately) that past CFE endgames have hinged on US leadership on the margins of continuous CFE discussions and said many Allies expect a similar way forward this time. End comment.

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